



Ted Lawrence,
Advertising Director
Missouri Press Service



More on Advertising

Newspaper veteran Peter Wagner, founder and publisher of the award winning N'West Iowa REVIEW and 13 additional publications, shared a fun and unusual revenue idea in the July eBulletin from Wyoming Press Association.

He says the idea came from so many families cancelling summer vacations. The idea is to publish one or more "StayCation" sections.

His team produced a four-week series of "StayCation" sections in 2011 when America's high gas prices also kept families close to home. This year he's kicked off a repeat effort for his newspaper communities that range from 400 to 7,000 population. The section will focus on finding fun things the family can do while staying close to home.

The advertising dollars for these sections, says Wagner, can come from numerous sources: local grocery stores promoting picnics and cookouts, convenience stores and restaurants offering easy to take-out treats, the community Chamber of Commerce promoting local shopping as well as local events, the city manager or clerk, the community economic director, local clothing stores, shoe stores, local banks, hardware stores, sporting goods stores, pharmacies, lumberyards, new and used car dealerships, automotive repair centers, fencing contractors, lawn care equipment dealerships, landscaping firms, new home construction and remodeling firms, electricians, plumbers and heating and air conditioning firms.

He also reminds us that if there is nearby boat access to a river or lake or perhaps a campground, boat dealers and RV dealerships are also good prospects.

Possible story ideas for a "StayCation" sections, according to Wagner:

1. A special food experience such as a picnic in the park with food from the local bakery and meat locker, a resident known for their unique potluck dish or a resident who caters meals out of her home.
2. Local day trips such as museums, historic homes and overnight campgrounds.
3. An interview with a senior citizen comparing family gatherings 50 years ago to the ones today.
4. Interesting historical information about how the local golf course, city park or baseball field came into existence and how it got its name.
5. Why this year's community celebration won't happen, why it will be missed and what might be done instead.
6. What the community is offering this summer for the youth and adult activities. Are there any new unique programs?
7. A story on how some hometown family has redone their backyard for increased summer fun. A new deck, firepit, for example, or a pool, hot tub or playground equipment. Be sure to sell advertising to the suppliers.
8. Interviews with local residents about the many new experiences they are enjoying while staying home this summer.

Since most of the summer is already in our rear view mirror, perhaps we could adapt these ideas to this time of year. Readers could share "What we did on our summer StayCation" stories. Same sponsors, same approach. Just a retrospective, with a look at fall community events, etc.

If you try this, please let me know the outcome, and I'll share your results with fellow MPA members. Thanks!